

La création du monde

Thursday
March 31, 2016
Koerner Hall

ESPRIT ORCHESTRA

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& Conductor

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MUSIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

BEING WITH FRIENDS

Having musical friends return as guest artists for Esprit's concerts is always a great pleasure because it means that we start with a deep understanding of how we'll work together, what our capabilities are and what the sounds we make together will be like.

Having the Elmer Iseler Singers and Doug Schmidt as tonight's guests brings double happiness. Over the years we've had wonderful times collaborating with the Iseler Singers - Esprit's vocal soulmates. We've also enjoyed Doug's imaginative, sometimes humorous and quirky, thoughtful and entertaining musical inventions on many occasions.

We hope that you, as a member of our audience, develop a better understanding of and appreciation for the work of these artists through Esprit presenting them to you over time.

As for my own creation this evening, I'm deeply grateful to Michael Koerner who has supported me in this endeavour - one which brings together superb artists in a piece that I've wanted to write for many years.

More than anything, all of us onstage wish you listening pleasure and musical nourishment for the ears, mind and spirit through what you hear.

Yours sincerely,



Alex Pauk, C.M.
Founding Music Director and Conductor

La création du monde

ESPRIT ORCHESTRA

**ALEX PAUK, Music Director and Conductor
THE ELMER ISELER SINGERS*
LYDIA ADAMS, Conductor**

Thursday March 31, 2016 | Koerner Hall

7:15 pm **Pre-Concert Chat** featuring Lydia Adams, Hussein Janmohamed, Alex Pauk, and Douglas Schmidt – Hosted by Alexina Louie

8:00 pm **Concert**

PROGRAMME

Darius Milhaud *La création du monde* (1923)
(France/U.S.A)

Hussein Janmohamed
(Canada) ***Nur: Reflections on Light*** (2014)
for choir
II. Light Unveiled
IV. Light Suspended

Douglas Schmidt (Canada) *Sirens*** (2016) (World Premiere)

INTERMISSION

Alex Pauk
(Canada) **Devotions***** (2016) (World Premiere)
for choir and orchestra

- I. Wondrous Tao
- I. Be Brave!
- II. Lifting Hands
- III. Mask
- IV. Luminous Spheres Ascending

*The Elmer Iseler Singers are guest artists generously sponsored by John B. Lawson, C.M., Q.C.

****World Premiere** commissioned by Esprit with generous support from The Koerner Foundation

***World Premiere commissioned by The Koerner Foundation through The Elmer Iseler Singers

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TIMOTHY & FRANCES PRICE

ESPRIT ORCHESTRA

Alex Pauk, Music Director and Conductor

VIOLIN I

Stephen Sitarski,
*Concertmaster**
Parmela Attariwala
Joanna Zabrowarna
Elizabeth Johnston
Sonia Vizante
Laurel Mascarenhas

VIOLIN II

Bethany Bergman
Hiroko Kagawa
Louise Pauls
Janet Horne Cozens
Marianne Urke
Erica Beston

VIOLA

Douglas Perry*
Rhyll Peel
Nicholaos Papadakis
Bridget LaMarche

CELLO

Marianne Pack*
Olga Laktionova
Elaine Thompson
Peter Cosby

BASS

Tom Hazlitt*, *electric bass*
Hans Preuss
Rob Wolanski

FLUTE

Douglas Stewart*,
piccolo, alto flute
Maria Pelletier, *alto flute*

OBOE

Lesley Young*
Karen Rotenberg

CLARINET

Colleen Cook
Michele Verheul

BASSOON

Jerry Robinson
William Cannaway,
contrabassoon

HORN

Christine Passmore
Diane Doig
Bardhyl Gjevari

TRUMPET

Robert Venables
Anita McAlister

TROMBONE

David Archer
David Pell
Herb Poole, *bass trombone*

TUBA

Scott Irvine*

SAXOPHONE

Wallace Halladay

PIANO

Stephen Clarke, *celeste*
Gregory Oh, *electric piano*

HARP

Erica Goodman

PERCUSSION

Ryan Scott*
Trevor Tureski
Mark Duggan
Blair Mackay
Daniel Morphy

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Please see
Page 9 of this
program for more
information.

ELMER ISELER SINGERS

Lydia Adams, Artistic Director and Conductor

SOPRANO

Anne Bornath
Amy Dodington
Gisele Kulak
Claire Morley
Cathy Robinson

ALTO

Joan Campbell
Claudia Lemke
Alison Roy
Laura Schatz

Honorary Life Members

Donald Bartle
Donna Colley
Judith Young

TENOR

Eric MacKeracher
Mitchell Pady
Will Reid
Michael Sawarna
Edward Wiens

BASS

Alexander Jozefacki
David King
Nelson Lohnes
Graham Robinson
Michael Thomas
Hussein Janmohamed

***The Elmer Iseler Singers' appearance is generously sponsored by John B. Lawson, C.M., Q.C.*

ELMER ISELER SINGERS

Lydia Adams, Conductor
and Artistic Director

THE ELMER ISELER SINGERS' NEXT TORONTO CONCERT:

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Linda Beaupré, Conductor

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ALEX PAUK

Founding Music Director, Conductor, and Composer

Alex Pauk was inducted into the Order of Canada on September 23rd, 2015. As a composer, conductor and educator, he revitalized orchestral life for composers across Canada in 1983 by founding Esprit Orchestra as Canada's only orchestra devoted to new music. With a core of 65 top instrumentalists, Canada's best soloists, and an annual subscription series in Toronto, Esprit encourages composers to take bold new directions. Through building and sustaining Esprit's high calibre performances, commissioning programme, innovative programming (80% Canadian), recordings, performing arts videos and DVDs, outreach projects, tours, and interdisciplinary arts and media ventures, Pauk has been a leader in developing and promoting Canadian music at home and abroad.

As a conductor, he attains excellent performances on stage and in recordings. His innovative programming and commitment to the community through Esprit have garnered SOCAN and Chalmers Awards as well as three Lieutenant Governor's Arts Awards. He was named *Musician of the Year* (1999) by peers at the Toronto Musicians' Association, was a recipient of Canada Council for the Arts Molson Prize (2007) and has helped many composers advance their careers through commissions, high profile performances, recordings and broadcasts. Pauk's commissioning of Canadian composers of all ages and stylistic trends is central to his work. He has been a leader in taking new music out of the concert hall and to people in their communities. Under Pauk's direction, Esprit was awarded the 2005 Vida Peene Award for excellent standards of performance and innovative programming.

Alex Pauk has a wide range of experience as a composer with works for every kind of performing ensemble, theatre, and dance companies. Revealing this depth of experience, his most notable compositions include: *Touch Piece*, a multimedia work for full orchestra, 16 channel surround sound with digital sound track, sounds of nature and altered orchestral sound projected from loudspeakers, multi-screen video environment and fabric sculptures with special theatrical lighting; *Farewell to Heaven*, a full length work for the Menaka Thakkar Indian Dance Company; and three works involving important Canadian virtuosos: *Concerto for Harp and Orchestra*, *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra*, *Flute Quintet*, and *Musique immergées* for chamber orchestra and audio playback.

Impulse, his work for flute orchestra, will be premiered with New Music Concerts on April 24th in Toronto.

STEPHEN SITARSKI

Concertmaster

Stephen Sitarski enjoys a varied career as a violinist and musician. He is Concertmaster of the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, holds the same position with Esprit Orchestra, and held the same position with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony (KWS) for 15 seasons (1997 – 2012). During his tenure in K-W, Mr. Sitarski became Artistic Director of the KWS Baroque and Beyond. Stephen has also been guest concertmaster across Canada and the United States, working with many distinguished conductors including Mstislav Rostropovich, Philippe Entremont, Raymond Leppard, Bramwell Tovey, and James Judd. He has served as Associate Concertmaster of the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, and was guest concertmaster and featured soloist with the National Ballet Orchestra for *Eugene Onegin* and *Russian Seasons* in March 2011.

Stephen frequently appears as soloist with many concertos in the standard repertoire as well as concertos written especially for him by Canadian composers such as Kelly-Marie Murphy (*Blood Upon the Body*, *Ice Upon the Soul*, 2006 premiere with Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony) and Glenn Buhr (*Violin Concerto*, 2000 premiere with Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony). Stephen is a founding member of Trio Laurier, formed in 2007 with cellist Paul Pulford and pianist Leslie De'Ath, and is a regular participant in diverse chamber groups and festival events nationally and internationally with many of Canada's finest musicians. He is also a frequent performer with Toronto's acclaimed the Art of Time Ensemble and Soundstreams, with which Stephen completed a tour in May 2012 to Taiwan and China, performing works by Tan Dun and R. Murray Schafer.

As an arranger, Stephen has arranged music for the Emperor Quartet (over 20 arrangements of show tunes and popular songs), Quartetto Gelato (*Octosca*) and the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony (Canadian and Italian national anthems).

Stephen was awarded the Queen's Jubilee Medal, a nomination submitted by the National Youth Orchestra, where he is a faculty member. Stephen is also on the faculty of Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Toronto's Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music, and is a frequent mentor for Hamilton's National Academy Orchestra. He has taught at the Banff Centre for the Arts, was an instructor at the University of Manitoba, and has maintained an active private studio.

LYDIA ADAMS

Conductor

A native of Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, Lydia Adams received her musical education at Mount Allison University, New Brunswick, and at the Royal College of Music and the National Opera Studio in London, England. She has conducted choral works of major Canadian composers including Harry Somers, Harry Freedman, Louis Applebaum, Ruth Watson Henderson, Christos Hatzis, Alex Pauk, Eleanor Daley and Peter Togni, among others.

An innovative programmer, Ms. Adams has included over 55 new commissions in the past 17 years. Her own compositions are performed worldwide. Ms. Adams has toured extensively and guest conducted throughout Canada and the United States, and in 2009 she conducted a tour of the world's first Cree opera, *Pimooteewin: The Journey*, by Tomson Highway and Melissa Hui. 2013 Artist Winner of the Ontario Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts, and 2012 Winner of the Roy Thomson Hall Award of Recognition, she is also an ambassador of the Canadian Music Centre and hailed by the CMC as "the new leading exponent of the Canadian choral composer."

Lydia Adams is Artistic Director of both the Elmer Iseler Singers and the Amadeus Choir of Greater Toronto, national leaders in commissioning, premièring, performing and recording Canadian choral works. Past conductor of several Canadian Provincial Youth Choirs, the National Youth Choir of Canada, and a guest conductor with ACDA Honor Choirs in Michigan and Colorado, in 2012 she was the guest conductor at Tasmania's Festival of Voices. Dr. Adams possesses extraordinary musicianship and a true passion for the choral art form. Her expertise, unique approach and dedication make her a vibrant and inspiring musical force.

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THE ELMER ISELER SINGERS

Guest Artists

The Elmer Iseler Singers, conducted by Artistic Director Lydia Adams since 1998, is a 20-voice professional chamber choir based in Toronto, Ontario. The choir was founded by and nurtured under the direction of the late Dr. Elmer Iseler. The choir has built an enviable international reputation since its debut performance in 1979. With repertoire that spans 500 years of choral music, the choir is critically acclaimed for its wide interpretive range, luminous tone and peerless tuning and blending.

Under the direction of Lydia Adams, the choir has recorded 10 CDs of Canadian music in the past 15 years – a remarkable contribution to the music of our country. The choir has had a profound impact on the international artistic field as well, with a discography of over 50 recordings and 300 published choral scores. The Canadian Music Centre states that “Lydia Adams is the new leading exponent of the Canadian choral composer,” and has chosen her as one of its 50 Ambassadors nationwide.

The choir has performed throughout Canada and the United States, as well as internationally, and continues to tour Canada regularly. With over 100 works commissioned to date, the choir is frequently involved in consecutive performances of new choral compositions in Ontario runouts, workshops and concerts and a variety of and produced recording projects. In 2008 the Elmer Iseler Singers' cooperative venture with Soundstreams resulted in the world's first Cree opera, *Pimooteewin – The Journey* by Tomson Highway with music by Melissa Hui. In 2011 the choir received an East Coast Music Awards nomination for Best Classical Recording, and a JUNO Awards Best Classical Composition nomination for Peter Togni's *Lamentations of Jeremiah*. The most current CD of EIS is the self-produced *Elmer Iseler Singers' Greatest Hits Vol. I*.

The Elmer Iseler Singers is a vital force in the choral field in Canada and internationally, and has a strong commitment to employ local/Toronto, Ontarian and/or Canadian artists – both within the choir and as soloists, who often go on in their careers to become major forces in our Canadian choral milieu.

Through its 37 year history of recordings, publications, live concerts, masterclasses, workshops and broadcasts – both on radio and television, and now through the Internet – the Elmer Iseler Singers continues to be a leader in the development of professionalism in choral music in Canada.

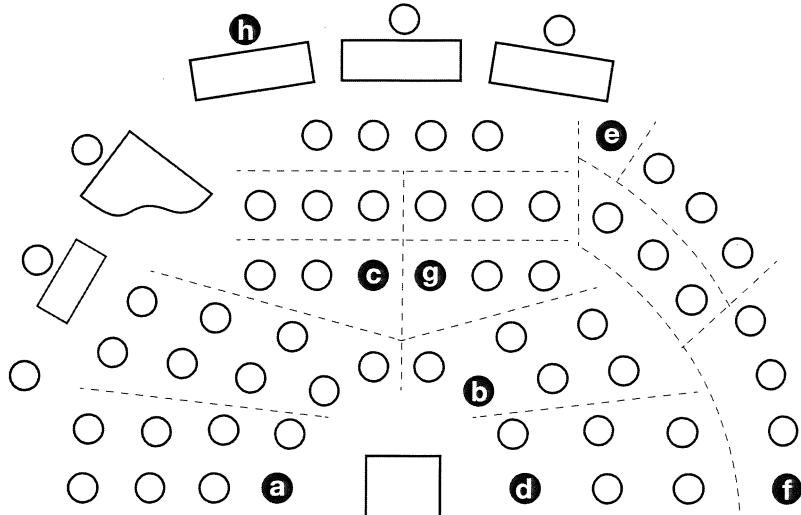
SPONSOR-A-PLAYER

and support Esprit's musicians for the 2016/17 Season!

In sponsoring a player, you will directly impact Esprit and support our most precious resource – our musicians! Spots are now open for the 2016/17 season. Please contact the Esprit office to find out member benefits and how you can become a member.

Special thanks to our patrons who have already generously sponsored the following players:

- a) David Novak – Concertmaster
- b) Alan Torok – Principal Viola
- c) David Sherr – Principal Flute
- d) John & Barbara Sutherland – Principal Cello
- e) Roger Moore – Principal Tuba
- f) Robert Mellin – Principal Double Bass
- g) Helmut Reichenbächer & John Stanley – Principal Oboe
- h) Robert Morassutti – Principal Percussion



DARIUS MILHAUD

***La création du monde* (1923)**

The anti-romantic taste and enquiring mind of the young Milhaud naturally found American jazz attractive. Its influence was felt most strongly in the music he composed in the wake of his first exposure to it, in 1920. Three years later, he received a commission from the innovative Swedish Ballet. The scenario was inspired by African myths about the beginnings of life.

In the original production, the curtain rose on near darkness, gradually revealing a mass of intertwined dancers. The African gods of creation intervened in this state of chaos by chanting magic spells. Life began to erupt: trees shot up and dropped their leaves, which sprouted into animals. As night turned into day, human limbs began to appear, until a male and a female dancer emerged and performed a dance of desire, then a mating dance. Finally the couple, united by love, stood peacefully on stage, as the first spring began.

Here is Milhaud's own description of his emotionally charged, yet tender and dignified music: "The expansive saxophone melody is followed by the rhythmic theme, the fugue that infects the whole orchestra with its agitation. The music accompanying the appearance of the plants and animals is very sinuous. Furthermore there is the clarinet concertino which heralds the dance of desire, then the superimposition of the concertino and

the fugue which marks the climax of the ballet, the mating dance. The saxophone is heard once again and the coda brings together and disperses the work's different melodic elements within the space of a few bars."

PROGRAM NOTE COURTESY OF THE VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

HUSSEIN JANMOHAMED

***Nur: Reflections on Light* (2014)**

Composer's note:

Nur: Reflections on Light is a collection of miniatures and choral soundscapes exploring the ineffable nature of light. The collection includes site-specific compositions commissioned by the Aga Khan Museum for the opening of the Ismaili Centre Toronto and premiered by the Elmer Iseler Singers. The music interweaves melodies from Ismaili Muslim devotional literature, Quran recitation, classical Indian ragas and North American folk music into textures inspired by early and contemporary choral music.

The piece draws inspiration from Ayat an-Nur (24:35) – Verse of Light from the Quran and the play of light and shadow on the walls of the Aga Khan Museum and Ismaili Centre Toronto. I wondered about the sound of light. I reflected on how light could be a wave or a particle, or both. Light could be diffused or concentrated. Light, no matter how you slice it, is still light. White light through a prism becomes many, but still all one light. In the music, like light, voices resonate in

unison, splinter into multiplicity, interact and come back to one like the one soul from which the diversity of all humankind comes and returns.

The heart of inspiration for this composition is the Ismaili Centre Toronto prayer hall, housed under a great crystalline multi-dimensional dome. When I visited the space for the first time silence overcame me. I felt a sense of suspended breath that became a point of departure for the composition. I wondered whether through sound we could reach into the silence beyond what we know and perhaps, there, in a liminal space experience humanity mingling peacefully in light.

Light: Unveiled traces a melodic contour based on Quran recitation. Drones create tension and symbolize separation from Divine heart to which we return. Wave-like, the melody emerges into light with the statement of *Nurun 'ala Nur* (Light upon Light.) *Light: Suspended* is the heart of the composition inspired by the Ismaili Centre Toronto prayer hall. Melodic fragments from two Ismaili devotional melodies and a North American song *O Shenandoah* resonate a longing heart for the vision of the beloved. In a structured improvisation singers create a sonic landscape, like Canada, shifting over time.

DOUGLAS SCHMIDT

Sirens (2016)

Composer's note:

My original intention was to compose

a work based on the broad concept and inspiration of 'Sirens', ancient mythological birds with female human heads known for their hypnotic songs and luring sailors into the ocean depths to their eventual deaths.

This piece is a sort of tone poem. The first section of the piece represents the songs of sirens (featuring piccolo and bassoon), the central part represents the futile struggle of the main character (featuring harmonium organ) who succumbs to the song, and the final section is presented as the individual reflecting on his entrapment by the siren song (alto flute, oboe, flute, clarinets). This final section is spun as a fragmented counterpoint revealing distorted and convoluted memories of his past life.

I liked the Asian concept of a single interrupted breath per phrase on the woodwinds representing the sirens and the harmonium pump organ with lung like breathing bellows representing the soul or life of the main character. The melodic lines in the beginning and end of the composition are also intentionally Asian in their design. So the piece by default became a type of *concerto grosso* where a group of instruments are featured within a larger ensemble.

Through the course of composing the work it assumed a much larger symbolism for me, representing how we all as attracted like moths to our gadgets and the often inaccurate news media who manipulates our emotions and thoughts, transforming us into very different beings. This is a sort of death of our true selves and is

so slowly accomplished that we can only try and remember who we really were.

My personal experience of an unexpected move to Saigon is also reflected in the final part of this composition. I have learned how important it is for humans to have some point of familiar reference to people and things around us or in our immediate environment. When that is absent, we are only left with fleeting memories of past places and experiences.

ALEX PAUK *Devotions* (2016)

Composer's note:

My intention in composing *Devotions* was to create a work with spiritual values that people could relate to without a strong religious imprint. Originally I thought of writing a kind of modern-day mass. As I searched for appropriate texts, I was drawn to those that reflected humanistic values or expressed wonder or reverence for the universe we live in and the forces that impact everything we know about. In parts of the text I myself wrote, I was even able to make reference to the newly proven existence of gravitational waves - Einstein was right!

I was first struck by reading the *Tao Te Ching* by the ancient Chinese scholar/philosopher Lao Tzu. Concerned with our spiritual level of being, this two and a half thousand year old book not only offers wisdom

and guidance for living (The Way) but also reflects on the mysteries of creation and the eternal, inexhaustible essence of the universe we live in and the harmony of heaven and earth. In this vein I've also included fragments from Goethe and the Bible.

In the first movement, *Wondrous Tao*, rather than trying to express the complex and paradoxical guides for living found in the *Tao Te Ching*, I chose to focus on Lao Tzu's commentary about the mysterious, powerful yet serene, indefinable, eternal and flowing presence of the Tao everywhere - something wondrous. With this in mind, I assembled disparate fragments of Lao Tzu's writings adapted from innumerable translations of the *Tao Te Ching* - all providing a means for contemplating the essence of what the Tao is beyond the teachings for daily life. Additionally, words such as Kundalini and Mandala from other cultural and spiritual practices appear almost in an ornamental way but one that expands the reference of the piece to cultures, times and places other than Lao Tzu's China.

Be Brave!, the second movement, has a text that I myself wrote as an encouragement for people to take bold steps in overcoming adversity in human relations and life in general. The sung texts that begin and end this movement encourage passion, strength, calm, clarity of mind and determination in defeating enemies – not necessarily people but such things as illness and other difficulties. The impetus for this movement came from my reading of ancient Japanese

guides in swordsmanship and military strategy with their manner of thinking as applied to many other areas of life. As a mythological background on humanity's evolution, I've included a spoken text in the middle of the movement which appears in relief to the sung parts. It is an Inuit poem, offering a perspective on the spiritual nature of mankind on earth.

Lifting Hands, the third movement, provides a gentler approach and aims to create an intimate setting. My text for the first part of the movement reflects on love and sensuality as qualities we can't do without. The poem by ninth century Japanese poet, Godai Chitsu, concludes the movement with a universal question that is ever more common in our era of space exploration.

The fourth movement, *Mask*, is in fact designed as a musical mask with an episode for brass that serves to hide what follows – a mysterious Zen koan sung by women.

Most of the text in the fifth movement, *Luminous Spheres Ascending*, relates to transcendence through meditation, contemplation, and prayer to the God of one's choosing. In the middle section, a Balinese prayer for departing souls at cremations comments on the transformation of man's physical being back to its elemental properties – as the spirit ascends. Luminous spheres appear in a wide range of cultures and religions – as representations of gods or spirits, or even as vehicles for the spirit to ascend to heavenly realms. Prayer, transcendence, illumination – these

are subjects that I've tried to portray in harmony with the *Wondrous Tao*.

Please see next page for text.

ESPRIT extends a warm welcome to the following groups at tonight's concert

Canadian Children's Opera Company (CCOC)

Claude Watson School for the Arts

Here Is How You Listen

Regent Park School of Music

Toronto Ismaili Muslim Youth Choir

University of Toronto Music Education Students

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For more information on group ticketing rates for Esprit's 2016/17 Season, please contact outreach@espritorchestra.com.

I. WONDROUS TAO

Tao is great.
Heaven and earth are great.
The Tao is empty yet useful.
So profound, so rare, subtle,
serene - with gravitational
waves.
Tao
Heaven and earth are
impartial.
Kundalini, Kundalini, Kundalini.
Tao
Silent
Mandala
Heaven and earth have space
between
like a bellows changing shape
but not form -
the more movement, the more
creation.
Silent, vast,
Tao is illusive.
Tao, intangible.
Gate to mystery.
Eternal Tao
Intangible.
Nameless and flowing.
Image, form,
essence of faith,
Creation
Kundalini, Kundalini, Kundalini.
Wondrous Tao
flowing everywhere.¹

II. BE BRAVE!

Be brave!
Stay calm.
Show spirit.
Have intent.
Be brave!
Do not waver.
Stay calm,
strategize,
research,
show spirit.
Confuse, irritate your enemy.
Follow Tao -
the natural path -
the way of life, for life.²

In the very earliest time,
when both people and animals
lived on earth,
a person could become an
animal if he wanted to
and an animal could become a
human being.
Sometimes they were people
and sometimes animals
and there was no difference.
All spoke the same language.
That was the time when words
were like magic.
The human mind has
mysterious powers.

- - -

Nobody could explain this:
That's the way it was.³

Formation, transformation,
eternal spirit's
eternal re-creation.⁴

¹ Text fragments from Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching* plus additional phrases assembled by Alex Pauk

² Text by A. Pauk

³ Translated from Inuit by Edward Field

Be brave!
Stay calm.
Show spirit.
Have intent.
Do not waver.
Stay calm.
Be brave!⁵

III. LIFTING HANDS

Embrace me
divine Eros -
sensual beauty, beyond words.
Eternal nourishment.
Otherworldly beauty
guarding mind, psyche, spirit,
head and body.
Bond to an unconscious power
like a necklace.

Embrace me now
eternal soul, psyche.⁶

Lifting hands, I climb the South
Star,
Then turn to lean against the
North.
Step beyond the sky, look—

Where is there another like
myself?⁷

IV. MASK

What did your face look like
before your parents were
born?⁸

V. LUMINOUS SPHERES ASCENDING

Let my prayer be set forth
in your sight as incense,
the lifting up of my hands
as the evening sacrifice.⁹

In sublime transcendence
your hair will return to the
bushes,
skin to earth,
flesh to the waters,
blood to fire,
sinews to roots,
bones to wood,
eyes to Sun and Moon,
head to the sphere,
breath to the wind.¹⁰

Transcendence sublime.
Luminous, iridescent sphere
ascend.
Pray, chant, meditate.
Chant, pray, meditate.
Sing.
Praise.
Sing to your God.
Pray to your God.
Amen.
Luminous, shining sphere
ascend.
Praise heaven and earth.¹¹

⁴ Text from Goethe's *Faust*

⁵ Text by A. Pauk

⁶ Text by A. Pauk

⁷ Text from Godai Chitsu's poem

⁸ Zen koan

⁹ Psalm 141

¹⁰ Balinese cremation ritual text
adapted from translation by Ana
Daniel

¹¹ Text by A. Pauk

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BIOGRAPHIES

DARIUS MILHAUD

(b. 1892 – d. 1974)

Composer

A citizen of the world, Milhaud was a resolute traveller who lived away

from France and his native Provence for many years. Each immersion in a different country presented him with an opportunity to take in different cultures, rhythms and musical hues that enriched his artistry and nurtured his creativity. His work is a unique example of musical syncretism both in his expression and in the means he employed. His vast output, which spreads across all genres, shows an irrepressible need to write music unhindered by aesthetics or technique. It did not matter where he was, he never stopped composing.

Milhaud's music is often bathed in a recognisably Mediterranean light combining his French (and especially Provençal) roots and his Jewish spiritual traditions with jazz and other popular music from Brazil, the Caribbean, the USA, and the Middle East.

Aesthetically, he was a free spirit. Milhaud's early works were Debussy-esque, but quickly evolved under the influence of his teacher in counterpoint, André Gédalge. After attending the premiere of *Le Sacre du printemps*, he, with his friend and fellow composer, Charles Koechlin, analysed the polytonality and the rhythmic language Stravinsky employed. Enlightened by the expressive power of rhythm and polyrhythmic combinations Milhaud began to explore rich percussion

soundscapes and abandoned classical harmony-based structure in favour of a more horizontal organisation, based on linear melodies. He cultivated a personal style that blended harshness, softness and poetry, dissonance, polytonality and lyricism.

While Milhaud conducted the Parisian premiere of Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, his style was not like the Viennese atonality of his time. He preferred Latin tonal traditions, which he employed to create polytonal and polymodal textures, which allowed for both occasional tonal harmonies as well as dramatic dissonances.

The most important element of Milhaud's musical aesthetic was the melody. While his later compositions became a little more abstract, throughout most of his work his transparent, polytonal textures highlight melodic lines. Like Schönberg and Webern, he often abandoned the traditional symphony orchestra in favour of smaller ensembles with highly refined tonal combinations, putting him in the forefront of the renovation of the traditional symphonic orchestra. He also experimented with musical developments of his time like aleatory, which can be heard in *Musique pour Ars Nova* and introduced audience participation for the first time in a symphonic work in *Musique pour San Francisco*.

Passionately political throughout his life, Milhaud's hatred for barbarism, racism, discrimination, and injustice can be found in *Le Château de feu*, *La Tragédie humaine*, and *Ani maamin*, and he demonstrated his

commitment to peace, the rejection of violence, and ecumenism in *Ode pour les morts des guerres*, and *Pacem in terris*. These pieces still evoke strong emotion today.

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HUSSEIN JANMOHAMED
(b. 1969)
Composer

Hussein Janmohamed is a Toronto based singer, composer, music educator and composer with a passion for exploring what role choral music performance, composition and collaborative creation can play in responding to diversity and shaping a plural Canadian identities.

Hussein's compositions weave spiritually inspired vocal traditions from across the Muslim world into contemporary choral textures and soundscapes. Works include *Sun on Water*, generated at the Doris McCarthy Artist in Residence Retreat (Premiere: Amadeus Choir); *Nur: Reflections on Light*, commissioned by the Aga Khan Museum for the opening of the Ismaili Centre Toronto (Premiere: Elmer Iseler Singers); *Gatherings*, co-creation with Lil'wat writer Russell Wallace (Premiere: Youth Peace Choir at Tribute Concert for His Holiness the Dalai Lama); *Mombasa Matatu Mediation*, commissioned and premiered by The Esoterics (Eric Banks) at a concert of new choral music inspired by Islam.

Hussein has sung with the Elmer Iseler Singers as the James T. Chesnutt Choral Scholar and guest

conducted the Toronto Ismaili Muslim Youth Choir. He has also sung with Chor Leoni Men's Choir, Phoenix Chamber Choir, UBC University Singers and the National Youth Choir of Canada. He is the founding co-conductor of Cor Flammae (Canada's first queer professional choir) and founding conductor of the Vancouver and Canadian Ismaili Muslim Youth Choirs. Hussein has also conducted UBC Choirs, the Douglas College Chorus, Vancouver Peace Choir and the Sarah McLachlan Children's Choir.

A sought after speaker, clinician and facilitator Hussein's interactive workshops enable people of all backgrounds and abilities to be inspired through choral excellence, and to discover meaningful ways to weave their unique voices into the Canadian sound/landscape. Speaking highlights include the TEDx Terry Talks at UBC, 2015 Emergence Symposium, IB World Student Conference, Aga Khan Museum, UBC Student Leadership Conference, BC Music Educators Association and the International Society of Music Educators (ISME).

Hussein is grateful to his family, friends, mentors, Ismaili and choral communities for their constant guiding hand, support and companionship along this creative journey. He is currently pursuing a PHD in Music Education at the University of Toronto.

DOUGLAS SCHMIDT

(b. 1955)

Composer

At the age of 7 a door to door accordion salesman came to Douglas Schmidts' house selling accordions. The choice offered was a red or a white instrument. Douglas chose the red one and tentatively began his music career. At the age of 12 he became also interested in the clarinet, bought an instrument for 20 dollars and began to play on it. Two years later at the age of 14 he started winning many instrumental competitions on the accordion but soon became frustrated with the lack of good arrangements and repertoire available for the instrument at that time. So began a career of composing and arranging his own music.

Much later while completing a Doctorate of Music degree at the University of British Columbia, Douglas had a meeting with the legendary bandoneonist and composer Astor Piazzolla, an experience that eventually changed his musical direction. Piazzolla stated that finding and keeping ones identity through personal experience as a musician is crucial but not easy to achieve. Schmidt now plays and performs on the German bandoneon and also composes music. The bandoneon is an incredibly complicated German type of concertina designed to play church music as a substitute for the organ and was adopted by Argentineans for their tango music. It seems to have become a cultural icon in that country. Schmidt believes that the instrument chose him, the sound and feel of

playing it becoming part of his mental and physical essence. Playing music on it is a little like a relationship with a temperamental girlfriend, there are bad days and good days. Since meeting Piazzolla Schmidt has performed with many symphony orchestras including the Buffalo, London, Montreal, Esprit, Nova Scotia, former CBC, Victoria, Montana, and at the Berlin Philharmonie etc..

As a composer he wears many different stylistic hats but strives to maintain an individual voice of uniqueness. Allowing his immediate environment and experiences to directly influence his musical creativity is crucial. As a Canadian citizen Douglas has lived in Dusseldorf and Berlin Germany for six years and now resides in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) South Vietnam teaching International Baccalaureate Music. He is also currently an examiner for the Oxford University International Baccalaureate music program.

ALEX PAUK

(b. 1945)

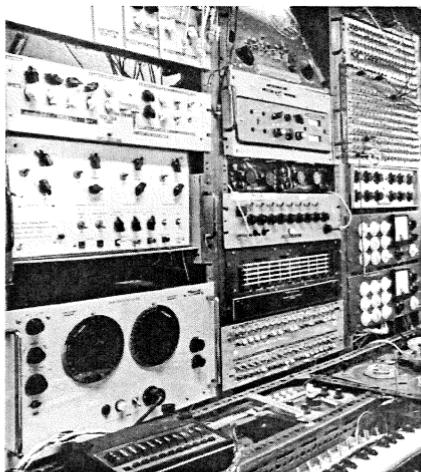
Composer

See Page 5.

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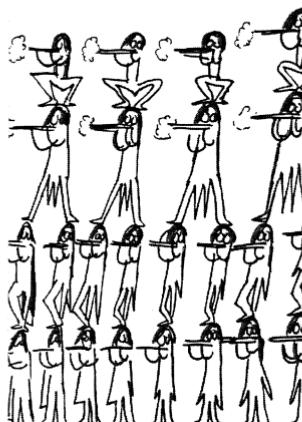
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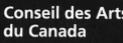
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